

## Book Reviews

*Ibn al-Jazzār on fevers: a critical edition of Zād al-musāfir wa-qūt al-ḥāḍir. Provisions for the traveller and nourishment for the sedentary, Book 7, Chapters 1–6*, The original Arabic text with an English translation, introduction and commentary by **Gerrit Bos**, Sir Henry Wellcome Asian Series, London, Kegan Paul International, 2000, pp. vii, 217, £65.00, \$110.00 (hardback 0-7103-0570-2).

With this volume Gerrit Bos presents a critical edition and English translation of the last section of Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-musāfir* which will be welcomed by Arabists and non-Arabists alike. This medical compendium, translated into Latin by Constantine the African (d. ca. 1087) under the title *Viaticum Peregrinantis*, was one of the most influential medical treatises in medieval Europe, and, along with other Arabic medical books, it became part of university medical studies. Divided into seven Sections or Books, only Book 6 (on conditions concerning the sexual organs) has been the subject of a critical edition with translation into English by Bos himself, published in 1997 within the series of the volume under review here.

Following the same structure of his previous publication, Bos begins with a concise introduction dealing with Ibn al-Jazzār's biographical data, the description of extant manuscripts, and a survey of the medical contents to be found in the six chapters (regarding different types of simple fevers) into which Book 7 is subdivided. A nicely printed Arabic edition and translation follows. The volume ends with a glossary-index of *materia medica*, as well as indexes (not glossaries, as stated in the headings) for technical terms and for proper names, first in Arabic and afterwards in English. A short bibliography closes the volume.

Traditionally, the role of philologists has consisted in making accessible Arabic texts (and their translation) to other scholars,

but we should, as well, try to contribute to other aspects of the history of medieval Islamic medicine. Leaving aside that our knowledge of medieval Islamic medicine would improve if historians, philologists and doctors alike incorporated current historical approaches in their studies of written materials, a deeper discussion of historical, social and literary contexts would have been desirable. Unfortunately, the introduction is very synthetic, particularly when the reader is referred to the introduction to the edition and translation of Book 6 for Ibn al-Jazzār's biographical and bibliographical details, and when the description of manuscripts virtually repeats blocks of information, taken from the same introduction, in which only references to foliation and given manuscripts have been conveniently arranged. As for the last section in the introduction to Book 7 under review, one of Gerrit Bos's scholarly features is his wide ranging linguistic skill, which he displays in this publication in the form of a comparative analysis of Ibn al-Jazzār's Arabic text with Greek and Byzantine sources. On this occasion, it is accompanied by a comparison with later Arabic medical texts on fevers by Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and al-Mājūsī (d. 994). Although impressive, this survey and evaluation of the contents of Book 7 from Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-musāfir*, fails to accompany the exposition of theoretical statements on fevers belonging to different periods and medical authors with a personal interpretation of data. Nevertheless, this work is a valuable tool, since historians of medieval Islamic medicine, as well as specialists on Graeco-Roman and medieval medicine, will now have access to this important medical source on fevers from Ibn al-Jazzār's *Zād al-musāfir*.

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